

Testimony regarding  
Governor Lamont's budget recommendation for FY 2022

Appropriations Committee  
February 17, 2022

Good afternoon Co-chairs Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Emily Duszlak and I am a graduate student at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and I am a resident of Willimantic, CT.

I am testifying before this committee today to express my frustration with Governor Lamont's budget proposal regarding educational funding. I am urging this committee to reject the governor's proposed budget for public education.

As a daughter of a retired elementary school teacher, I have seen firsthand how the lack of school funding can affect a school district. Not only does it affect teachers, like my mother, who often spent her own money on school supplies, but it also has a drastic impact on the outcomes of students' ability to learn.

There are clear disparities across the state regarding how much each town spends per child per academic year. For example, Sharon spends roughly \$46,735 per student; however, my hometown of Pomfret only spends \$18,459 per student.<sup>1</sup> That is less than half of what Sharon spends per student. This is just one example of many across the state, and within this disparity the intersections of race and lower rates of educational success are clear.

CT has a high rate of segregation in its public school districts. In particular, a majority of the state's BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) student population is concentrated in less than ten districts. As of 2020<sup>2</sup>, seven majority BIPOC student population school districts border towns with at least one majority white population school district. My town is one of the seven; Windham borders eight towns with majority white population school districts<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, school districts with higher BIPOC student populations generally serve students with greater learning needs but spend less money per student.<sup>4</sup> Contrarily, school districts in CT with a higher percentage of white students with fewer learning needs spend more money per student. Governor Lamont's proposed budget recommendations would ultimately result in a decrease of \$5.6 million in funding toward education.<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion, I am asking you to:

- Reject Governor Lamont's proposed budget recommendations for education;
- Demand that educational funding be distributed more equitably; and
- Consider investing in our childrens' futures.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Emily Duszlak

#### References

1. School + State Finance Project. (2022). *District and school spending*.

- <https://ctschoolfinance.org/issues/spending>
2. School + State Finance Project. (2020). *Face sheet: Racial disparities in Connecticut education funding*.  
<https://ctschoolfinance.org/resource-assets/Racial-Disparities-and-Educational-Funding-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid.